

UNTITLED BECAUSE IT DOESN'T DESERVE ONE

i start to say, "did you know
john cheever had an older brother
who did much better than he did
in school?"

and she says, "wait, stop,
i've got it -- his name was arnold
but he always signed it

a. cheever. my god, it seems like
i've been with you for ages."

"the romantic age? the renaissance?
surely not the victorian?"

"no," she says, "the dark ages."

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

LITTLE AGONIES

It's a feeling,
more than anything.
It's the way
the dryer hums
in the afternoon,
the way the registers
rattle like old bones.
Little things become big.
We've only seen the sun
three times in a month,
but we hate to complain.
Other people have it
so much worse.
A letter comes
from a friend; Bob says
he'll divorce his wife
one of these days.
The final humiliation
will come, but
indecision is agony.

I file Bob's letter
under D for dreams,
right before dust.
I know Bob's complaints
like my own.
Librettos of lament.
We went to school together,
had the usual dreams.
Came to this.
When we were kids,
there was a reed
we used to cut.
When you blew thru it,
it made a high
agonizing whistle
that hurt your ears
for days afterwards.
We kept doing it,
even though we
never understood why.